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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/630,255	08/01/2000	Edward A. Wells		6899

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G Turner Moller
720 American Bank Plaza
Corpus Christi, TX 78475

EXAMINER

DOUGHERTY, JENNIFER R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3672

DATE MAILED: 03/11/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/630,255

Applicant(s)

WELLS, EDWARD A.

Examiner

Jennifer R. Dougherty

Art Unit

3672

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 November 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 15-17, 19 and 20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 14 and 18 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

-Claim 10 is rejected as dependent on a cancelled claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

4. Claims 1, 4-6, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Casey (US 6,148,923).

The invention of Casey includes all the limitations of claims 1 and 16 including:

A ball/lower section (80) and a sleeve/upper section (10/15) which join together for pushing liquid together (column 8, line 15-column 9, line 7).

With respect to the dependent claims Casey also teaches: the sleeve having an upper and lower end (20 and 60) and seating surface (63)-claim 4; the sleeve having a central passage (figure 1A)-claim 5; the seating surface recessed inside the sleeve (figure 2)-claim 6; the dropping occurring when the gas is flowing up (column 8, lines 30-38)-claims 17 and 19; the ball nesting in the sleeve (figure 2)-claim 20.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 10-13, and 15 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Casey (US 6,148,923) in view of Despax et al. (US 4,625,795) and Jennings (US 5,415,227).

As discussed above, Casey discloses all the limitations of claims 2, 3, 7, and 11 (including an exterior seal (40) and a bumper (56)) except for teaching the sleeve being made of a titanium alloy and the ball being made of a titanium or silicon nitride alloy.

Art Unit: 3672

Both titanium and silicon nitride are well-known to be strong and corrosion resistant, properties which would be advantageous when the materials are employed in wells. Further, Despax et al. teaches titanium used to make well sleeves (column 3, lines 45-46) while Jennings teaches the advantages of using silicon carbide in well tools (column 3, lines 36-43). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have used the titanium or silicon carbide described in claims 2 and 3 to form the ball and sleeve of Casey, since the advantageous properties of both materials are well known and both materials are known to be used in the well arts, as taught by Despax et al. and Jennings.

With respect to the dependent claims Casey also teaches: only one upper section comprising a sleeve (figure 2)-claims 8 and 10; the dropping occurring when the gas is flowing up (column 8, lines 30-38)-claim 12; a wellhead (figure 7)-claim 13; dropping the upper section with essentially no liquid next to the bumper (column 8, lines 15-56)-claim 15.

Allowable Subject Matter

7. Claims 14 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jennifer Dougherty whose telephone number is (703) 308-6365. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM (EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bagnell, can be reached on (703) 308-2151. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-3597.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

jrd

August 21, 2001



DAVID BAGNELL
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600